

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8874

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UNCLAS LAGOS 3571

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EWWT, NI

SUBJ: LAGOS/APAPA PORT CONGESTION

REF: STATE 69954

1. AS OF APRIL 14, OFFICIAL DELAY PERIODS FOR SHIPS WAITING TO BERTH AT NIGERIAN PORTS WERE AS FOLLOWS: AAPAPA IMPORT --- 85-90 DAYS; APAPA EXPORT --- 2-5 DAYS; LAGOS CUSTOMS QUAY 25-30 DAYS; APAPA LIGHTER -- 15-20 DAYS; PORT HARCOURT (GENERAL CARGO) -- 38-40 DAYS; PORT HARCOURT (CEMENT) -- 25-8 DAYS; WARRI -- 3-6 DAYS.

2. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT HIGHEST LEVELS OF NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT, SPURRED IN PART BY PUBLIC OUTCRY, ARE FOCUSING INCREASED ATTENTION ON PROBLEM OF PORT CONGESTION. ON APRIL 4, HEAD OF STATE PAID SURPRISE VISIT TO APAPA PORT, URGED PORT WORKERS TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE, AND HINTED THAT HE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO APPLY MILITARY TECHNIQUES TO THAT END, IF MORAL SUASION NOT EFFECTIVE. A FEW DAYS LATER, FMG ANNOUNCED SERIES OF EMERGENCY MEASURES, INCLUDING (A) ESTABLISHMENT OF ACTION COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF COMMISSIONERS OF TRANSPORT, WORKS AND HOUSING, FINANCE, AND TRADE; AND (B) STREAMLINED CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AIMED AT CLEARING CARGO FROM PORT WAREHOUSES AS

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QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

3. COMMENT: THE TWO MAJOR BOTTLENECKS IN LAGOS /APAPA PORT ARE: TIME REQUIRED TO OFFLOAD CARGO FROM VESSELS; AND TIME REQUIRED TO CLEAR CARGO FROM WAREHOUSE SO THAT NEW CARGO CAN TAKE ITS PLACE. THOUGH THE FIRST BOTTLE -NECK IS PERHAPS MOST SERIOUS, SECOND OCCASIONALLY COMES INTO PLAY, AND STREAMLINED CUSTOMS PROCEDURES COULD GO LONG WAY IN RELIEVING PROBLEM OF FULL WAREHOUSES. PROBLEM OF OFFLOADING TIME IS TOUGHER NUT TO CRACK AND MAY REQUIRED IMAGINATIVE SOLUTION SUCH AS USE OF LANDING CRAFT OR HEAVY-LIFT HELICOPTERS.

4. TO ANSWER REFTTEL, THERE ARE NO BULK CEMENT STORAGE FACILITIES WITHIN LAGOS/APAPA PORT. IN FACT, NORMAL PROCEDURE IS THAT IMPORTERS OF CEMENT BRING TRUCKS ALONGSIDE VESSELS, CLEAR CUSTOMS ON SPOT, AND EVACUTE IMMEDIATELY TO THEIR OWN WAREHOUSES. ON UPSHOT OF THIS PROCEDURE IS THAT WHEN PORT WAREHOUSES ARE FULL, AND CAN ACCEPT NO MORE GENERAL CARGO, VESSELS CARRYING CEMENT ARE OFTEN BROUGHT TO FRONT OF LINE AND OFFLOADED SO AS TO PREVENT STEVEDORING CAPACITY TO SIT IDLE. NET EFFECT IS THAT CEMENT GENERALLY (NOT ALWAYS) CLEARS PORT FASTER THAN GENER

F.#IN ADDITION, OF COURSE, CERTAIN SHIPMENTS-- E.G. THOSE DESTINED FOR BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL CONSTRUCTION -- ARE ENTITLED TO PRIORITY BERTHING REGARDLES OF SITUATION IN WAREHOUSES.
CROSBY

NOTE BY OCT: #AS RECEIVED.

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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